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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet makes suggestions and recommendations for inservice education practices in Virginia on information obtained from a survey conducted in 1978. Guiding principles are outlined for developing and implementing inservice teacher education programs focusing on the following areas: (1) current practices in inservice programs; (2) areas of needed improvement; (3) inservice delivery systems; (4) program features; (5) supporting agencies in Virginia; and (6) state plans and programs. (JD)

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IN-SERVICE EDUCATION FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL IN VIRGINIA

Guiding Principles

A Priority in Pursuit of Quality Education

Developed with the Assistance of the
Virginia In-service Education Committee

OFFICE OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
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FOREWORD

This brochure was prepared to promote the improvement of education by developing better in-service programs for personnel in all school divisions in Virginia. In-service education is clearly job-related and is a responsibility of the local school divisions which requires the assistance of many individuals and community groups.

This publication is the outgrowth of work of the Virginia In-service Education Committee during 1978-79. Under the committee's direction, a survey of in-service education practices was conducted in December 1978. Many of the suggestions and recommendations that are included in this publication were based on information obtained from the survey.

Dr. Ben M. Harris, of the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Texas, served as consultant for the committee.

N. Grant Tubbs
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DEFINING IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

In-service education may be defined as planned opportunities for learning which are intended to improve the performance of staff personnel.

In-service education is job-related. It assures the development of new skills, higher levels of proficiency, and greater competence.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

- Society demands better-educated citizens.
- Taxpayers expect efficient schools.
- Children and youth need quality education.
- School personnel are the most valuable resource available in public education.
- Improvement of personnel competencies, on the job, directly affects student learning.
- Effective personnel evaluation leads to accountability.

Research shows that high-quality in-service education programs produce results. No other approach to improving education can be more effective.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles for in-service education (ISE) that follow are based on the best available knowledge of their effectiveness. Research and professional judgment support the use of these principles in guiding the development, revision, and evaluation of in-service education. Some modifications may be necessary, however, to meet specific needs.

Violation of these principles may lead to ineffective or inefficient in-service education, or both.

ISE for all personnel is a responsibility of the local school division. State guidelines, standards, staff, and funds support in-service education as a local responsibility. Resources of colleges, professional associations, and other agencies should be used to support local programs.

ISE programs are directed by designated staff personnel. Staff leadership is assigned to in-service education. Many resources are called upon, but responsibility is clearly delegated.

ISE plans are carefully developed as both long- and short-range programs. Plans address high priority goals. Goals of various programs are integrated into a comprehensive plan and relate to accountability requirements.

ISE FUNDS are provided and are carefully budgeted to assure time, personnel, travel, materials, and other requirements for high-quality training. Provisions are made for use of released time, consultants, and contractual services with institutions of higher education and agencies.

ISE needs are served through assessments of school personnel, students, related institutional needs, and also community expectations.

ISE participation involves classroom teachers in various aspects of assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating in-service programs. Teachers have special rights and responsibilities in developing quality ISE. However, the responsibility for conducting in-service programs and identifying needs rests with all staff members.

ISE objectives give priority to growth in competence that is job-relevant, important to both the individual and the school, and of enduring professional worth.

ISE programs and outcomes are evaluated, as far as possible, with objectivity. Data are systematically gathered and analyzed. Evaluation findings are fully utilized.

CURRENT PRACTICES

A survey of 125 school divisions, conducted by the Department of Education in the fall of 1978, revealed that:

- The various school divisions in the state were improving their in-service education programs in many ways.
- Ninety percent of the school divisions were operating their own in-service education programs. Presumably, all divisions have some ISE operations
- Seventy percent of the school divisions utilize teachers, as well as others, in ISE activities.
- Eighty percent of the school divisions included supervisors, principals, and teachers in actively planning ISE.

- Fifty percent of the school divisions reported 25 or more hours of ISE for the average teacher.

- Seventy to 90 percent of the school divisions utilized Department of Education or college personnel, or both, in planning and conducting ISE programs.

- Most divisions utilized college or university personnel in planning and conducting 20 to 50 percent of their ISE programs.

- Sixty percent of the school divisions offered more than 20 percent of their ISE programs in a small-group format.

- Eighty-five percent of the school divisions offered released time from duties for staff to participate in 10 percent or more of the ISE programs.

----However, there is ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT in most ISE programs.

- Expenditures for ISE average about $2.85 per student.

- Short-range planning is characteristic of ISE programs in most school divisions. (Typically, plans are projected only a few months ahead.)

- Large-group activities are offered in approximately 40 percent of the ISE programs in most divisions.

- Individualized ISE is still rather limited in most divisions.

- Teacher involvement in assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation tends to be limited and perhaps superficial in many divisions.

- Required, rather than optional, attendance dominates ISE offerings in most divisions.

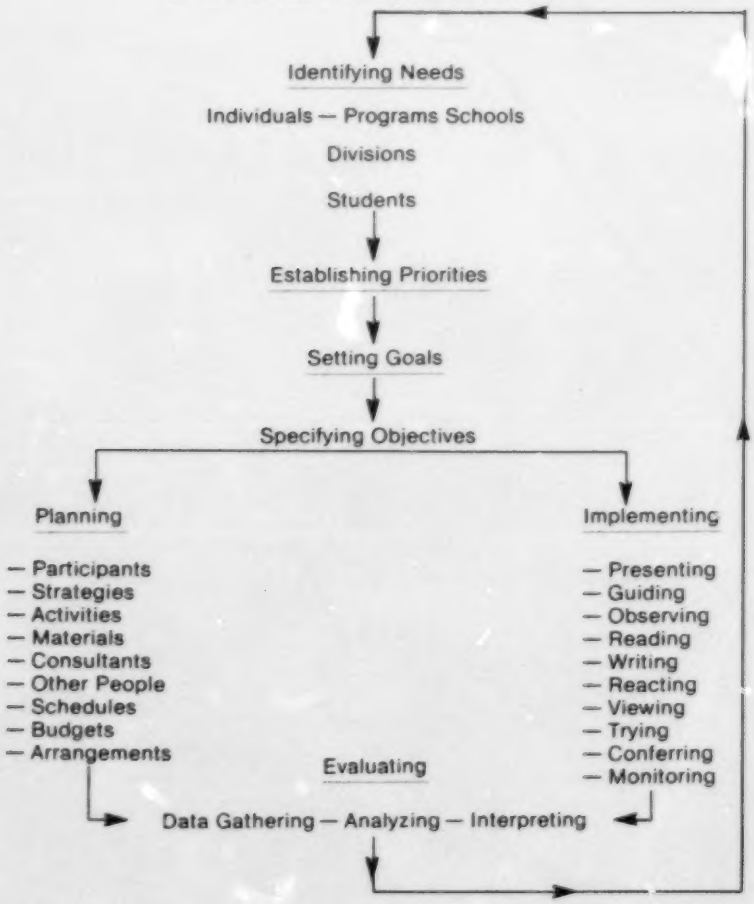
- ISE evaluation procedures tend to be fairly superficial in most school divisions.

- Activities show a trend toward lectures, materials and curriculum preparation, and discussions in most school divisions.

- High-experience impact activities — demonstrations, role playing, microteaching, etc. — are still not commonly used in many school divisions.

FLOWCHART OF MAIN EVENTS

IN OPERATING IN-SERVICE PROGRAMS



AREAS OF NEEDED IMPROVEMENT

The results of the survey indicate there are several promising ways of improving ISE. Planning needs to be more systematic and of longer range, extending to two or three years. Plans should provide greater continuity of learning opportunities and make full use of all available resources — teachers, principals, consultants, colleges, and professional associations.

Funds need to be increased and carefully budgeted to provide opportunities for travel, use of training materials, released time for teachers, and contracts for services provided by colleges and other institutions and agencies. Personnel may need to be reassigned and trained, or new persons employed, to assure competent leadership for ISE.

Program designs need to be more rigorous. More intensive learning experiences should be offered to assure improvement in classroom practices. More individualized experience should be provided and greater use should be made of high-experience impact activities. Demonstrations, role playing, simulations, laboratory training, field trips, clinical techniques, and directed practice sessions can be used to replace many of the lectures and group meetings that lack high-experience impact. Activities should be designed to involve personnel, to deal with real situations, and to develop the skills of participants. Program designs should emphasize learning how to do the job as well as knowing how to do it.

Organized institutional arrangements need to be developed for the systematic delivery of a variety of ISE programming. Advisory councils representing all interests should be organized. A qualified staff should be assigned clearly delegated responsibilities for overall direction of programs. Policies should be adopted to give direction and priority to ISE, and evaluation capabilities should be developed to guide improvements in program offerings.

Needs assessments should focus on individual staff members and also on school and divisional needs. Identified needs should be studied carefully to determine those of highest priority for individuals and institutions alike. The unique needs of individual staff members should receive high priority.

PROMISING DELIVERY SYSTEMS

Many divisions will want to consider the possible advantages of in-service education delivery systems that are not traditional.

Equivalent Time Programs are sometimes called "cafeteria" or "super-

market" arrangements. A broad array of ISE sessions are offered throughout the school year. Offerings during late afternoons, in evenings, and on Saturdays and school holidays provide opportunities for individuals to choose the topics and schedules they prefer. Regularly scheduled in-service education days are still planned as part of this delivery system. However, staff members may accumulate the total number of hours required by local policy, add extra hours if interested, and also have opportunities for "a day off" when ISE is scheduled, if equivalent time has already been "served."

Clinical Supervision Programs involve a highly individualized effort to focus on specific classroom practices. A formal clinical relationship is developed between the ISE clinician and teacher. A preconference is utilized for planning the focus of an observation. The clinician observes the teacher in the classroom and records and analyzes events. The teacher and clinician confer again to discuss the teacher's performance in the classroom and plan ways by which it might be improved. The teacher then returns to the classroom for further observation and the cycle is repeated as often as necessary to perfect new practices.

Individual Professional Growth Plans are also based on classroom observations or other diagnostic procedures for assessing needs. Conferences are used to reach agreements on a specific objective or objectives for improvement. A plan is developed for individualized growth. The plan details what will be provided, who will be responsible for the ISE program, when the training should be completed, and when results are to be evaluated. A great deal of independent study is usually involved in this delivery system.

Professional Development Centers operate as highly organized units for providing intensive training. Some staff members are released full-time or periodically to receive training. Specific on-the-job practices are designated as the learning outcomes. Only staff members who are willing to implement these practices are released to participate in the in-service sessions. Participants come in groups from their respective schools. A permanent training team directs the activities.

OTHER delivery systems are available. Teacher centers take various forms. School-based project-centered programs are worthy of note. Regional service centers offer unusual promise for smaller divisions.

PROGRAM FEATURES

Within any delivery system programs can and should be characterized by diversity! No one type of program is superior. Programs that feature alternative choices, relevant topics, learning that can be applied in the classroom, active involvement of participants, continuity of experience, and released time are most likely to be successful.

- Minicourses taught by classroom teachers and demonstrating exemplary practices are promising.

- Microteaching using videotape recording of mini-lessons and involving a small group in which staff can analyze procedures has been shown to be effective in the development of new skills.

- Demonstrations of exemplary practices by highly skilled teachers have been shown superior to talking about such practices.

- Visits permitting groups to study other schools, classrooms, and programs in operation can stimulate interest and promote new improved practices.

- Clinical planning, observing, and pre-planning in which plans are made to try new techniques or procedures and a formal clinical observation cycle is used to guide implementation, have great value.

- Instructional TV with two-way communication provides an effective means of presenting new ideas and demonstrating practices to large numbers of people.

- Independent reading and study planned as part of a larger program can provide the knowledge necessary for implementing new practices.

All of these features and many more can be part of any ISE program. (None of these activities by itself is likely to represent an adequate program.) All of these activities can be effective — differentially so! Minicourses focus on knowledge; microteaching enhances skills. They complement but do not substitute for each other. Similarly, demonstrations and visits generate new understanding and are highly motivating but cannot assure development of better practices as can clinical procedures.

Individualized in-service education needs of teachers and administrators are always important in the selection and presentation of program features or activities. Individualization should be based on assessment of needs for:

- improving instruction

- changing assignments and expectations, and

- overcoming weaknesses.

Positive and productive change in teaching behavior appears to occur most consistently when:

- A competent practitioner is available to demonstrate new or alternate teaching skills or strategies.

- Teachers are given the opportunity to practice the skills.

- The practitioner is available to observe and confer with teachers practicing the skills.

- The practitioner is available when needed and has no formal evaluative relationship with the teacher.

SUPPORTING AGENCIES

School divisions use various supporting agencies in developing high-quality in-service education programs. A comprehensive system of personnel development can rarely be organized or sustained without support from various sources.

- Federal programs of various kinds will offer support for ISE. Title IV, P.L. 94-142, and Teacher Corps and Teacher Center legislation are only a few examples.

- Colleges and universities have important roles to play in ISE as well in pre-service and graduate professional staff development. In offering technical assistance with planning, evaluating, and providing specialized personnel for ISE, colleges and universities can greatly enhance the availability of programs. School divisions should work with local colleges in planning in-service education programs to make efficient use of regular college courses as individualized in-service experiences for staff members. Colleges can also enhance in-service efforts with special offerings that are integrated into local division plans.

- Professional associations have a continuing interest in the in-service education of their members. School divisions can incorporate the associations' professional development activities into their programs when such activities clearly serve individual staff needs.

- Other agencies can support divisional plans for in-service education. Commercial concerns have excellent materials and consultants. Non-profit consulting and training organizations are now abundant. Charitable or endowed foundations may have supporting services to offer.

- Every community has individuals who can contribute to in-service education programs. Students, parents, businessmen, professionals, and artisans have skills and knowledge to offer that can improve staff performance.

STATE PLANS AND PROGRAMS

• Vocational education personnel development is guided, in part, by the Virginia State Plan for Vocational Education: 1978-82. Goals for in-service education focus on leadership development, career counseling, awareness of new occupations, and business and industry exchanges.

• Special education guidelines for in-service education are directed toward the development of a comprehensive, statewide system to prepare educators to serve handicapped children. In-service training of both regular and special personnel is projected. Ten program goals for special education provide the framework for assessing needs and planning training.

• Elementary and secondary education divisions of the Department of Education are responsible for promoting in-service education of teachers in response to Standards of Quality and Objectives for Public Schools in Virginia and to other state objectives. Furthermore, in-service education of administrators, supervisors, school board members, and other groups is a special concern of the department.

The Department of Education duties and responsibilities in promoting in-service education include:

- encouraging leadership, research, and development to assure necessary funding, legislation, and policy development.
- providing guidelines and technical assistance to help school divisions plan, implement, and evaluate their programs.
- monitoring current practices, emerging needs, and new developments in in-service education to insure continued progress of the programs.

The Department of Education is concerned with the critical issues which have emerged in the "right-to-education" movement. The educational rights of the handicapped, non-English speaking, alienated, low-achieving, and dropouts are all legitimate concerns in improving education. The needs of these students have broad implications for teaching as well as for curriculum development associated with the moral, civic, and humanistic dimensions of schooling. Furthermore, they demand individualized and creative approaches to teaching which only in-service education of high quality can foster. Obviously, these student needs are also closely allied to school finance, resource allocation, and the effective application of the Standards of Quality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In Review

***More clearly defined local policy, staff responsibility, and budget allocations.

***More fully developed program plans with priorities assigned to needs, long- and short-range goals, and program continuity.

***More effective, more stimulating in-service experiences, full collaboration with teachers and with colleges and other agencies, and systematic evaluation to direct program planning.

CHECK YOUR IN-SERVICE PROGRAM OPERATIONS

Circle your answer for your division.

1.	A policy has been adopted clearly giving support to in-service education as a priority program.	Yes	?	No
2.	Responsibility is assigned to a local staff person for planning, organizing and implementing in-service education programs throughout the division.	Yes	?	No
3.	Plans (short- and long-range) are developed in sufficient detail to guide in-service education activities to fulfill a variety of needs.	Yes	?	No
4.	Funds are budgeted to provide for travel, released time, training materials, equipment, and consultant and contracted services for in-service education.	Yes	?	No
5.	Needs of individuals and staff are served in ways that clearly result in improved job performance.	Yes	?	No
6.	Classroom teachers are involved in various aspects of the program — assessment, planning, implementing, and evaluating — making them actual rather than token participants.	Yes	?	No
7.	In-service programs develop growth in individual staff members that improves performance.	Yes	?	No
8.	Evaluation is rigorous, systematic, objective, and practical, leading to improved in-service programs.	Yes	?	No

SOURCES

Many books and pamphlets have been published in recent years concerning in-service education in schools. A few that might be helpful include the following:

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